



Defining aspects of critical evaluation

- **Relevancy:** the information's level of importance to a particular reading purpose or stated information need
- **Accuracy:** the extent to which information contains factual and updated details that can be verified by consulting alternative and/or primary sources
- **Reliability:** the information's level of trustworthiness based on information about the author and the publishing body [*most* and *least* reliable]
- **Commercial bias:** the extent to which information appeared to be influenced by commercial interests for or against a certain product.



Evaluating Accuracy of Online Information

Total N=109



Only 20% have strategies for evaluating accuracy

3 = .02% N=2	I checked this information with www.____.com and they compared similarly. [checked with 2nd reliable source]
2 = 19% N=21	I know this is accurate because I learned it in science class. [compared with prior knowledge]
1 = 26% N=28	I know this is accurate because it's made by a corporation and there is a place to contact them. [implicit trust]
0 = 54% N=58	It seems right but you can never know; The website I think is always right; It had plenty of pictures; I checked it out with Ask Jeeves; Why would they lie? [misconceptions]



80% do not know how to evaluate accuracy or did not locate the page.



Evaluating Least Reliable Source

Total N=109



Only 32% correctly identified the least reliable source

3 = 14% N=15	There are a lot of misspellings, there is no way to contact the people who put out this site, and it's a .com compared to a .org or .gov [at least one critical attempt]
2 = 18% N=20	It's a .com and they are trying to sell you something at the very top of the page. [surface procedures]
1 = 21% N=23	It doesn't really talk about anything specific - there's not a lot of information about the topic [only relevancy or interest]
0 = 47% N=51	This is the least reliable source because the text is a little confusing to read. [readability, size of page, etc.]



68% considered only relevancy or interest or did not know.






